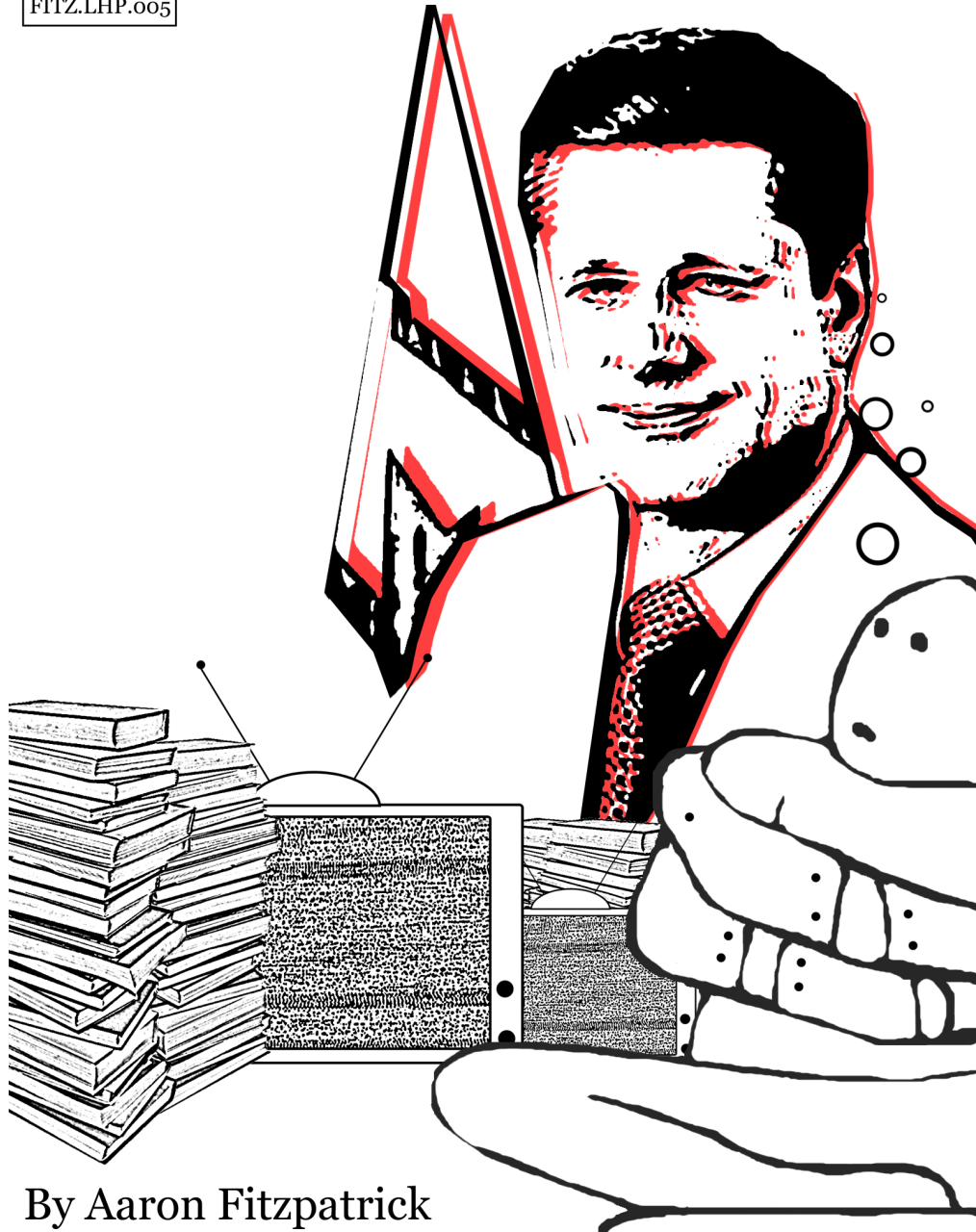


INSTITUTIONALIZED

Education, Corporate Media
and the Fraudulent Canadian Democracy

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By Aaron Fitzpatrick

Institutionalized Education, Corporate Media & The Fraudulent Canadian Democracy

Many of the long-standing institutions that we regard as important to the democratic process in Canadian society, are actually proving to be harmful to aspirations for a healthy society based on equality and understanding. The educational system, corporate media, and even the democratic process itself do more in the way of disempowering the people, rather than performing their assumed functions as beacons of enlightenment to Canadians. If Canadians are to progress through the current period of consumerist individualism that exists as a result of the domination of economic ideals over the valuation of human life and environmental fragility, then we will have to break down these repressive institutions, and think in terms of a network of free-thinking groups comprised of an informed population performing specific tasks, cooperating to forge a society built on the ideals of equality, sustainability and empowerment. The people must take responsibility to inform themselves and each other, and exercise shared information in the political arena to bring about changes that are beneficial to the society as a whole.

When Canada claimed to have gained its independence from the British Empire in 1867, the country in fact maintained many of the imperialist ideals that made the British Empire such a brutal force in the world for hundreds of years. Upon gaining "independence," Canada's ruling elite have retained the established order in terms of a centralized government ruling over a population, as opposed to a fair and equal society where the voices of the people play a significant role in how the country operates. One particular area in which Canada is assumed to be a "first world" nation is the

educational system. There have never been any major advances in how Canadians are educated. Canada's educational institutions, from the minute a child enters the system, act more as a tool of segregation and propaganda than as institutions of higher education. Like many other aspects of Canadian society, educational institutions operate to serve the economic machine. These institutions function as a means of turning out populations of unquestioning, glossy-eyed citizens whose only skills apply to workplaces where obedience and the maintenance of rigid time schedules are dominating ideologies. Schools in Canada fail to equip young people with the tools necessary for survival outside of the capitalist society. In this society, the necessities of life demand that one maintains a forty hour work week in order to survive. Canadian schools mould us to these expectations, while neglecting to encourage questions about the conventions of society, such as why the class system even exists and the principles of money creation. These values are instilled in us from the time we enter the education system, subconsciously easing us into the long standing imperialist/capitalist hierarchy where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. It could be said that "at least Canadians have the opportunity to receive a quality education," but what most Canadians experience in the educational system is seclusion and confusion. The natural instincts of humans to cooperate in groups based on emotional relationships are suppressed while ideologies of capital and individual gains are promoted, resulting in a population who mostly fail to empathize with one another; this is the competitive and divisive nature of capitalism. Our ability to effectively communicate with one-another on social and political issues is extremely

poor. This is a welcomed result to the ruling class, since an educated population who form groups that question the power structure pose a threat to the class system, which is based on wealthy elite doing what they want, unquestioned by a divided, individualist society.

In Canada, the corporate mainstream media goes a long way in establishing prejudice and misinformation in society. The media affects our ability to efficiently communicate with each other, resulting in a divided and distracted population. The primary function of corporate, mainstream media in Canada is to maintain a consistent and loyal audience, creating profit in cohesion with corporations who pay advertising dollars to the various media outlets. The media advertises products to the consumerist individuals that come out at the end of the brain-moulding educational system. The secondary function of corporate media in Canada is to misinform the Canadian public on major social issues, or to not inform them at all, performing as a potent distraction machine. These secondary functions act to shape a population that is easily guided to the ideals of the ruling class of politicians, who act on behalf of the corporations. Television, radio and print media distract the Canadian population with various forms of junk entertainment, which serve to keep Canadians as secluded individuals with interests that rarely stray outside of celebrity gossip or the corporate sports realm. Media outlets also masquerade as legitimate sources of information on matters of social and political importance, such as war and economics. However, corporate media is structured in such a way that while it may be delivering information on socially important issues, it typically lacks the time or space to deliver more than one side of a given matter. These forms rarely offer an in-depth analysis of a given issue, and they never provide solutions or alternatives. This combined with the fact that media outlets are

corporations out to gain profit, leads to biases that serve the current power system, which functions on the basis that the working majority performs the labour and the wealthy minority enjoy the fruits of working class efforts.

What is the purpose of the ruling power structure in Canada, and what does this power structure consist of? At first glance, one is lead to believe that the politicians and “elected” officials of the Canadian government make the decisions. And while politicians might be involved in the decision-making process, their primary objective is to appease corporate and economic interests. Canadian politicians rarely exercise their apparent power of law, clearing the way for environmental destruction and the degradation of communities through the issuance of permits for corporations to do whatever they want to the land and neighbourhoods in the name of profit. We are conditioned to believe that our society can only be run by these politicians, who are supposed to be qualified representatives of the Canadian people. Canadian democracy consists of ensuring that the people are so fed up with choosing from the same group of candidates (i.e. white businessmen sympathetic to economic ideals over human life) that most of the people don’t care about voting. This clears the way for the corporations to do what they please, with the people feeling that they have no power to effect change. Canadian democracy has cultivated a mindset throughout the population that “things will never change,” and we just have to accept the status quo. However, the status quo involves the destruction of the environment beyond repair, and the systematic degradation of human rights. Many Canadians currently live in comfort and aren’t suffering major hardships as a result of the governmental policy of environmental destruction and the global move

towards cheap human labour, which is largely incremental. But if we continue to allow elected officials to act in the interest of corporate, economic development via destructive measures, future generations will be left as slaves to the economic machine in a world devoid of a healthy, natural environment. We must hold elected officials responsible for the people they represent, and we must stand up to the corporate capitalist machine as a united population. Canadian governmental officials constitute the status quo, and will maintain the status quo unless the people become informed and come together to build a future based on equality and sustainability.

The Canadian democracy is a limited democracy and doesn’t encourage active participation from the people. It is clear that we can’t rely on our institutions to guide us towards the healthy society that we all have the right to, by virtue of all Earth’s inhabitants being equal. The idea that these institutions cultivate a socially responsible population of educated citizens is not the case. We can affect change in our society only by seeking truths and alternatives for ourselves, and by performing cooperatively with the common goal of building a planet based on health and equality for all.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Imperialism: The policy of extending the rule or authority of an empire or nation over foreign countries, or of acquiring and holding colonies and dependencies (See: U.S. Steel, North American Union, British Empire).

Fiat Currency: Any money declared by a government to be legal tender; state-issued money which is neither legally convertible to any other thing, nor fixed in value in terms of any objective standard. In Canada and America, the currency is based on the fact that we believe in its value, it is based on the idea that we can use it to pay off debt, and thus we can use it to pay for items. Fiat currency does not carry the value of a material good such as gold or steel.

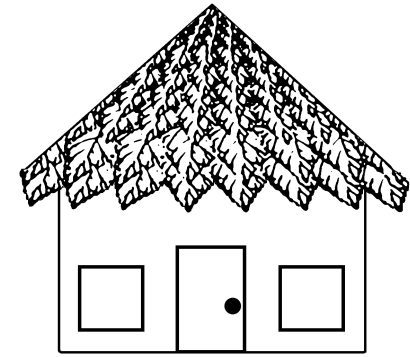
Capitalism: An economic system in which investment in and ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange of wealth is made and maintained chiefly by private individuals or corporations, especially as contrasted to cooperatively or state-owned means of wealth.

Democracy: Government by the people; a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system. (Note: Canada flies under the veil of "democracy," but when the people lack the will to participate, the government and corporations are allowed the freedom to make decisions in the name of profit, resulting in the destruction of the environment and the degradation of people's rights. As well, the people only have a limited pool of representatives from which they are forced to elect; we place our votes then often remain uninvolved in the governing of our communities.)

Direct Democracy: A form of government where decisions are made by an assembly of citizens who wish to participate in the governing process, as opposed to electing representatives.

Class System: A social order consisting of a lower class (impoverished, homeless, displaced peoples), a middle class (working class, typically carrying financial debt and identifying with consumerist ideals), and an upper class (a class that rules by default of wealth, resulting in political power as a result of a society being based on economic ideals.)

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Written by Aaron Fitzpatrick in the East End of Hamilton, Ontario in December 2010.

During the writing of this 'Zine, the following events were taking place:

U.S. Steel's lockout of 900 workers in Hamilton (USW Local 1005) was in its second month. The lockout represents the latest in the move by foreign internationals such as Vale Inco and U.S Steel operating in Canada towards dismantling worker pensions and further devaluing resources and human labour in Canada.

The Canadian public and international human rights groups continued to call for inquiries into police actions at the G20 summit in Toronto and Huntsville, Ontario in June of 2010. With each passing day, stories of sexual assault, excessive force and random law making are brought to light in an attempt to force action on those responsible.

For inquiries, feedback, notable 'zines and/or alternative information resources, please email:

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